

Psalm 30

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Sangamon County Fairgrounds (10:00 a.m.)

Dominant Thought: **God specializes in raising people from dark places.**

Objectives:

- We want our listeners to (know)...the different ways God meets us in our troubles.
- We want our listeners to (feel)...hope in the rescuing power of Jesus.
- We want our listeners to (do)...tell their story how God brought them up from a dark place.

Focusing Question: How does God raise people from dark places?

[Preach from NIV]

Warren: Hello! My name is Warren Brosi. I'm thankful to serve as minister with Berlin Christian Church. I'm joined by Anthony Bliss, minister with Loami Christian Church. I want to thank you for joining us today. I'm thankful for our partnership. We joined together once again this summer for a great Vacation Bible School. It was wonderful to see one church from two locations come together to share the message with the next generation.

We invite you to turn to Psalm 30 for our sermon text for today. I'm thankful to hear Megan read our text and for Jack to pray. Psalm 30 has a heading, "A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David." While David wrote this psalm for the dedication of the temple, he was not alive to see it built or dedicated. Since he was a warrior who killed many people, God told David his son, Solomon, would build the temple. The temple would be the place where God would meet with His people. It was the place where heaven and earth meet.

At first glance, this Psalm doesn't seem to fit a temple dedication ceremony. But as I reflect on it, where do you go when you need help? If you're sick, you go to a doctor. If your car is broken, you go to a mechanic. If your breakers keep tripping in your house, then you call an electrician. When life doesn't go as expected, where do you go? David's answer, you go to God for help. The temple was where you would go in the generations to follow.

As we walk through Psalm 30, we'll discover four ways God helps His people.

(WARREN) The LORD replaces...

1. Death with Life (Psalm 30.1, 3, 7, 9).

As we read Psalm 30, we see several images of death and life or something low and something high. In Psalm 30.1, "I will exalt you, LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths..." In Psalm 30.3, "You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit." Psalm 30.7, "you made my royal mountain stand firm." Psalm 30.9, "If I go down to the pit."

Highs and lows. It's possible David is recounting a near death experience. In Psalm 30.2 he writes, "LORD, my God, I called to you for help and you healed me." It appears David is experiencing a sickness that was close to death. He also reflects on how God did not "Let my enemies gloat over me" (Psalm 30.1). Maybe there are relationships that are crushing him and threatening his life.

Anthony: As pastors, we have met with people in difficult times. Maybe a loved one has died or they are preparing for a serious surgery. What do you say to people who are hurting?

As we talked this week, our presence speaks volumes. As followers of Jesus, when we enter into a difficult time with someone, we bring Jesus with us. We offer peace and comfort from the Holy Spirit. I try not to say too much. I will read a Psalm. Psalm 30 is a good one to read with people. I'll pray with them.

Last year, Nic Babbs and I interviewed a funeral director. He knows what it's like to meet people in difficult times. He said, "People won't remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel."

I can picture Jesus quoting Psalm 30.3 on that Easter Sunday morning. When Jesus rose from the dead, He fulfilled these words of David, "You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead" (Psalm 30.3a). Earlier in the gospel of John, Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11.25).

Later on that Easter Sunday, Jesus appeared to the Eleven disciples. They thought he was a ghost, but He showed them His hands and feet. They gave Jesus a piece of fish and He ate it in front of them. Then, Luke records, "He [Jesus] said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms'" (Luke 24.44). The Old Testament, including the Psalms, speaks

about Jesus. Psalm 30 is one of the examples that Jesus fulfilled. God raised Jesus from the dead. The LORD replaces death with life. This truth is the bedrock foundation for those who follow Christ. We trust in a God who raises the dead.

God specializes in raising people from dark places.

(ANTHONY) The LORD replaces...

2. Anger with Favor (Psalm 30.5).

Anthony: One of the most consistent things you see in the Bible is God rescuing humans out of these dark places. He is always pursuing us to draw us out of the darkness. That's why in addition to replacing death with life, we also learn that the LORD REPLACES ANGER WITH FAVOR.

Warren: Don't you think God's anger is one of the more misunderstood aspects of His character?

Anthony: Oh, absolutely. There's definitely the idea that a lot of people have that in the OT, God is just angry and vengeful, but in the NT, God is loving and gracious. And then some people struggle with the feeling that God is always mad at them. Like he's a boss always looking for an excuse to fire them, or a parent who always looks for reasons to be disappointed. Honestly, a lot of that probably comes from what kind of church background you grew up with or how the people you grew up around talked about God.

But verse 5, challenges any belief that God is mostly angry: ⁵ "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime;" Here we see that, yes God gets angry, but his anger is always a temporary thing and it is balanced by His deep love for us. One of the most common passages used to describe God comes from Exodus 34:6 and it talks about how anger isn't God's first reaction to us in all of our messiness. ⁶ "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.'"

Warren: So anger isn't meant to be the main thing we associate with God. But we still see plenty of places where God gets angry.

That's true. I think because of how poorly we tend to react when we're angry and how many dumb things we've seen people do when they're angry we just tend to see anger as a bad thing. But God gets angry at the right things and never responds foolishly. We learn in verses 6 and 7, that David shares of a time when

he took the blessings God had given him for granted and started to think that the reason his life was going so well was because he himself was awesome. “⁶ When I felt secure, I said, “I will never be shaken.” ⁷ Lord, when you favored me, you made my royal mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.”

So David has this bit of overconfidence in himself, and thought he was invulnerable. But then God hid his face from David. This could mean that God took away some of the blessings He’d given or maybe God even sent the sickness that led David to death’s doorstep. But this was God’s response to David’s sinfulness.

But even this anger is God’s grace. Because it shows David his sin and invites Him back into depending on God, rather than walking away from God in arrogance. So while being on the receiving end of God’s anger is unpleasant, even that is a gift because God is working to draw us back to Him.

Warren: What do you say to people who view God as an angry wrathful God?

I try to show them passages like this one, and remind them that even if God is mad, it’s temporary. His anger is only for a moment to correct us and lead us back to life in Him. And that is why David follows it with “His favor lasts a lifetime.” God’s love for us does not disappear just because He gets angry at our sin. His love for us is unending and never gets overshadowed by His anger. And more importantly, I explain that if God was just looking for an excuse to be mad at you, He wouldn’t have given His Son Jesus to die in your place. Jesus came to pay the price for all sin so that we can stand before God as righteous. That means God doesn’t define us by all of the bad things we’ve done and all the ways we’ve messed up, but God looks at us and sees the perfect life Jesus lived on our behalf.

(WARREN) The LORD replaces...

3. Tears with Joy (Psalm 30.5, 11).

We encounter another set of contrasts. The LORD replaces tears with joy. In Psalm 30.5 we read, “weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” In Psalm 30.11 we read, “You turned my wailing into dancing.” As you read through the Psalms, you will encounter lots of tears. They are called Psalms of Lament. Over half of the 150 Psalms are these sad songs. However, almost every sad song ends with a note of praise or thanks. And yet, they express their sadness to God and record His response.

Anthony: Can you name a time that you saw how God replaced your tears with joy?

Warren: I remember my grandmother Kathryn's funeral. She was my mom's mom. We called her Grams. We sang "How Great Thou Art." It was her favorite song. Then, I went to the stage at the Baptist Church in Moline, IL. I shared the memories about my grandma before the preacher gave the sermon. I can remember crying. It was difficult to say goodbye. I was thankful to share the memories of my grandma. The time she cut a bite out of a cantaloupe at the grocery store and sampled it. She put it back because it didn't taste any good. Times of her generosity helping those down and out. I think through sharing those stories helped turn my tears into joy. The assurance of knowing my grandma loved Jesus and loved her family helped turn my tears into joy.

Psalm 30 says, "weeping may stay for the night." God has given us emotions. It's okay to cry. Even Jesus cried at the grave of His friend Lazarus in John 11:32.

However in the new heaven and new earth we read this description in Revelation 21:4 (NIV), "4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

(ANTHONY) The LORD replaces...

4. Silence with Thanks (Psalm 30.4, 9, 12).

And one of the final lessons we can learn from Psalm 30 is that the Lord replaces our silence with Thanks. Oftentimes when we find ourselves in one of life's valleys, the tragic, painful, or just difficult seasons, often we are just left stunned. I'm not sure if it's because we tend to assume that our lives are going to go well, or if sometimes we're just too hurt to process the pain. But sometimes you just don't know what to do, what to pray, or even how to make sense of what is going on.

But God has a way to work in us, through us, or for us in these times of darkness that can eventually lead us to a place where we are so grateful for His work and help that we can't help but praise Him. That's why David gives so many references to praise and singing and celebration. As a response to God turning sadness to joy in verse 11, David says this in verse 12, "12 that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever."

Warren: Have you ever experienced God turning something around like this for you?

100%. The clearest example that comes to mind is that in 2016, we had a miscarriage. We found out at a regular OB appointment and we didn't see it coming at all. We were totally blindsided by it. I remember afterwards, Abby and I sitting on our bed hugging each other and just weeping. And we had to tell the boys who were already so excited about the baby. It was just a rough situation. But then the next year we had Eleanor. And I can't imagine our lives without her in it. And she's so fun and I thank God for her. And so it's complicated because without that miscarriage we wouldn't have her. But I'm not thankful that we had the miscarriage. But I'm amazed at how God can take something so painful and lead me to a point of being so grateful, where I can't imagine my life having happened any other way.

But **God specializes in raising people from dark places.** That was my story, but I've seen God do this in so many other people's lives. I've seen people with a terminal cancer diagnosis sing praises to God and tell me how grateful they were for all He's done for them. Because they understood that Jesus' redeems our souls and turns death into a doorway into a better way of life, they were able to grow in their gratitude even as their bodies' wasted away.

And with our God who can replace life with death, anger with favor, and tears with joy, how can you not praise Him when you witness that? Now, we wanted to close out today by hearing from someone who has lived this truth firsthand. Denise Cooper, walked through a dark, difficult valley this past year after being diagnosed with cancer. So I'd like to invite her now to tell us her story.

[Denise Speaks]

Thank you, Denise, for sharing your story with us. And this Psalm is a reminder that when you experience one of those seasons where God rescues you from a dark place, that the only proper response is praise.

If you are here today and you still find yourself in a dark place, we would love to pray with you after the service. Warren and I will be down front here ready to do that. Also, if you are here and aren't a follower of Jesus and maybe you have started to feel God inviting you in to experience the new life found only in Jesus, we also love to talk and pray with you as well.